



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BULLETIN

FALL SAFETY • SEPTEMBER 2026

Prepare for El Niño

What is El Niño?

El Niño happens when ocean water gets a lot warmer than usual. It can bring heavy rain and strong winds that can cause flooding and power outages in California. A few steps now can keep you safer this season.

Before severe weather:

- Clear leaves and debris from gutters and drains
- Keep sandbags ready if your area is at risk of flooding
- Charge your phone and devices ahead of time
- Plan for medical equipment, refrigerated medications, and communications needs during a power outage

During severe weather:

- Never walk or drive through flooded roads
- Stay away from beaches, rivers or creeks as water levels can rise quickly
- Check local weather alerts and emergency information

Learn more: What is El Niño? (pmel.noaa.gov/elnino/faq)

Medication Safety

A few simple habits can make medications safer to use and store.



- Keep medications in their original containers and away from children and pets
- Take medications only as directed. Never take medication prescribed for someone else or if you do not know what it is
- Use a calendar or phone reminder, if you need one, to remember when to take your medication



- Refill prescriptions before you run out
- Check expiration dates and safely dispose of medications you no longer need

Learn more: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov/medication-safety](https://www.cdc.gov/medication-safety))

Be Ready for an Earthquake

Practicing what to do during an earthquake can make it easier to act quickly when one happens.



If you can, remember: **Drop, Cover, and Hold On.**

- Drop to your hands and knees.
- Cover your head and neck under a strong table or desk if possible.
- Hold on and stay where you are until the shaking stops.

If you use a wheelchair, walker, or other mobility device and cannot get under a table during an earthquake:

- Lock your wheels.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or a cushion.
- Hold on and stay where you are until the shaking stops.

Learn more:

- Great ShakeOut ([shakeout.org](https://www.shakeout.org))
- Earthquake Warning California ([earthquake.ca.gov](https://www.earthquake.ca.gov))
- MyShake App (myshake.berkeley.edu)



Stay Safe After Dark

Shorter days in the fall and winter can mean spending more time outside when visibility is low. Make it easier for drivers and others to see you.



Be visible:

- Wear light-colored, bright or reflective clothing
- Add reflective tapes or lights to a wheelchair, walker, cane, scooter, or service animal
- Carry a flashlight or use the flashlight on your phone

Stay alert:

- Use sidewalks and marked crosswalks when available
- Follow traffic signals and watch for vehicles before crossing
- Put your phone away when crossing streets or moving near traffic
- When possible, bring a friend, family member, caregiver, or support person

Learn more: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Pedestrian Safety (nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety)



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